THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Development and promotion of tourist centres is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. The Central Department of Tourism has been and will continue to extend financial assistance within their available resources for development of tourism infrastructure in the State and would continue to promote and publicise different destinations of Rajasthan in key international markets as well as within the country. As the 8th Five Year Plan has not yet been finalised, it is not possible to indicate any financial implications or give other details.

Expanision programmes of Air India

*299. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to refer to the answer to UnStarred Question 15 given in the Rajya Sabha on 25th February, 1992 and state:

(a) what expenditure is likely to be incurred by Air India on its expansion programme; and

(b) what is the extent to which Air India would meet the challenges thrown up by other international open-sky competitors?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) It is difficult to quantify the expenditure to be incurred by Air India on its fleet expansion programme in future. In regard to restructuring of air corporations, the expenditure would relate to preliminary expenses regarding incorporation of companies.

(b) While Air India would certainly have to improve its competitive edge, the traffic entitlements continue to be regulated by the bilateral air services agreements as envisaged in the Chicago Convention, 1944.

Operation of courier service in the country

*300. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of courier services that have been allowed to operate in the country to carry mails/ postal cargos to cater to both domestic and international mails;

(b) whether there has been a mushroom growth of courier services with increasing number of public frauds;

(c) whether the business of Department of Posts including the E.M.S. Speed Post Service has been adversely affected by such unwarranted growth of private courier services;

(d) whether normal daks are delayed abnormally thereby defeating the purpose of the Department of Posts;

(e) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(f) what steps are being proposed to be taken to improve the efficiency of Government's Speed Post Services, opening of counters for round the clock booking facilities, deliveries on holidays, etc. in metropolitan cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) No Sir, there is no provision under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 to license any Courier service in the country to carry mail. Exclusive privilege of receiving, collecting, sending, dispatching and delivering letters vests in the Central Government under the Act.

(b) There is no information on this with the Department of Posts.

(c) Operations of private courier services results in some loss of revenue to the Department of Posts. The Department is however making efforts to increase the business of EMS Speed Post which has shown substantial growth in the last few years.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) In view of (d) above, does not arise.

(f) Monthly monitoring of Speed Post

is done regularly to ensure its proper functioning. Computerised. booking facility for cutomers is being provided in a phased manner. Round the clock booking facility has already been provided in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta on specified counters. There is no proposal for the present to introduce speed post delivery facility on holidays.

Duties irk NRI-Air Taxi Operators

2833. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report captioned "Duties irk NRI-Air Taxi Operators" that appeared in the 'Indian Express' of the December 13, 1991;

(b) if so, what are the precise demands of these Air Taxi Operators; and

(c) what is the Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Air taxioperators have been demanding certain infrastructural facilities at the airports, relief in countervailing duty and Special Excise Duty on import of aircraft and greater flexibility in repatriation of their dividends etc. Through notification No. 42/92-CENTRAL EXCISES dated March 1, 1992, aeroplanes and helicopters falling under sub-heading No. 8802.00 of the Schedule to the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985 (5 of 1986), have been exempted from the whole of the duty of excise leviable thereon which is specified in the Schedule. The revised foreign exchange regime also gives full freedom for repatriation of profits, dividends etc.

Comprehensive plan for Air Taxi Operator

2834. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:
SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is comprehensive plan to promote private air-taxi services; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and how the taxi services would be coordinated with national airlines so as to serve public interest at its best?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) The Scheme of Air Taxi operations was introduced in 1986 with a view to give boost to the development of tourism, supplement the services provided by the existing scheduled operations and improve the services by infusing some competition and also make available a fleet of aircraft in case of need. Air Taxi Services can be operated to any airfield to which scheduled services operate. There are no restrictions on the size and type of aircraft and fares.

एयर इंडिया के सहयोग से पर्यटन का विकास

2835. **डा० बापू कालदाते:** क्या नागर विमानन और पर्यटन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने के लिये पर्यटन विभाग के सहयोग में एयर इंडिया कोई योजना बना रही है; और

(ख) यदि हां तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है?

नागर विमानन और पर्यटन मंत्री (श्री माधवराव सिंधिया): (क) और (ख) एअर इंडिया ने भारत सरकार के पर्यटन विभाग के सहयोग से शुरू में यूरोप में पर्यटन संवर्धन कार्यक्रम शुरू किया जिसे बाद में यू०के०, यू०एस०ए०, आस्ट्रेलिया, पश्चिम एशिया और सुदूर पूर्व तक बढ़ाया गया।

इस योजना के अंतर्गत, एअर इंडिया के विदेशों में स्थित कार्यालय, भारत सरकार के पर्यटन कार्यालयों के साथ मिलकर नीचे दिए गए कार्य करते हैं:—